The Sun.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 1907.

Entered at the Post Office at New York as Second Class Mail Matter.

Subscriptions by Mail, Postpaid.

DAILY, Per Month.....$0 50
DAILY, Per Year.....6 00
SUNDAY, Per Year.....2 00
DAILY AND SUNDAY, Per Year.....8 00
DAILY AND SUNDAY, Per Month.....70
Postage to foreign countries added.

Published by The Sun Printing and Publishing Association at 170 Nassau street, in the Borough of Manhattan, New York.

If our friends who favor us with manuscripts for publication wish to have rejected articles returned they must in all cases send stamps for that purpose.

Nine Millions; One Hundred Millions; Two Hundred and Fifty Millions.

The taxpayers of this State are paying interest on nine millions of dollars, which was spent for them a few years since on the improvement of the Erie Canal under the able administration of Mr. G. W. ALDRIDGE. The canal was not improved; there is no vestige of an asset to show for the money; it was simply stolen. Every year the taxpayers pay the interest on that nine millions, just as if they had had some advantage from its expenditure. For how many years to come will the taxpayers, and the descendants and the successors of the taxpayers, continue to pay the interest on that nine millions of squandered and stolen money? Can any one tell?

The people of the State of New York do not enjoy being robbed, but it is true that no real public resentment was manifested over the loss of that nine millions of dollars. The impunity with which it had been attended naturally led to another raid on the taxpayers, this time for no less a sum than one hundred millions of dollars!

The proposition to spend $100,000,000 in deepening the Erie Canal from Lake Erie to the Hudson was submitted to the people. It was turned down in the State, but was carried by the overwhelming vote recorded in this city, a vote which THE SUN believes was never cast, but was purely fictitious and fraudulent.

The most specious and plausible argument in favor of the project was that the increase in the canal's capacity would serve as a check upon the rapacity of the railroads; it would insure low rates on merchandise from the Lakes to the sea.

It was not then foreseen that the Federal Government was presently to assume jurisdiction over railroad rates.

The most specious and plausible argument against the opposition to the project was that of an intelligent and truth loving press, which declared that the only resistance to the canal came from the railroads, and was therefore corrupt and vile in its nature.

No railroad opposed it. One president said the construction would bring ten millions worth of traffic to his road. There was no organized opposition. There was only that opposition which was instinctive with every honest and sensible man in the State.

Well, we have begun the work; we have entered upon "public contracts," the infallible and unvarying anæsthetic for public robbery, and we have begun to dip steadily for million after million of the taxpayers' money. Already the interest is being demanded and paid upon the first of the interminable series of millions of which the people of this city and State are to be defrauded, millions which are now to follow hard upon the heels of that lost nine, and like it to be inexorably lost.

If the people have ordered this canal, which we deny; and if they are now determined to have it, inasmuch as they have gone through the form of beginning it, perhaps they will not be adverse to glancing at the prospect. They may reflect that, having ordered it, it would appear to be competent for them to countermand it. He that would play the fool, in mercy let it be with his eyes opened to his folly!

Economists are agreed that grain or merchandise in bulk will presently go by two water routes from Lake Michigan to the ocean; one route, the Calumet Canal to the Mississippi and Gulf; the other and the sooner to be created, the new waterway to the St. Lawrence. Either of these would suffice; but as the latter will be in operation long before our canal can be finished, it is interesting to learn that the day upon which it begins business will see the last bushel of grain in transit from Buffalo to New York. We suppose it is cynical and offensive to inquire: What are we building this canal of ours for?

Impossible as the hypothesis is, let us suppose that we shall see our canal open for business. Will any one be good enough to compute the interest on the cost of a cargo of wheat (assuming that twenty years hence the United States will be an exporter of grain in any form) in transit between Buffalo and New York and compare the amount with the probable total railroad charge which may be assumed to prevail at the same time? The general consensus of scientific deduction is that long before we should have finished our canal all traffic in the commodities which a canal might be assumed to affect will have ceased. We ourselves do not think there is any doubt of it. All the same, the canal must be constructed; since the only necessity that can be determined with certainty in respect of it is the necessity of spending $100,000,000 of the taxpayers' money. And bear in mind, too, that there is no engineer of approved character and eminence in this country who will give his professional opinion that our canal can be built, not for $100,000,000, but for $250,000,000!

We have the temerity to divine that these matters are even now occupying the mind of our new Governor and adding to his perplexities. That the canal was created as an asset for the Republican machine; that he inherited it and all of its grievous obligations as such—these things, we believe, will count for absolutely nothing with Governor HUGHES.

Japan's Interest in Peace.

The injudicious talk in some quarters about the imminence or inevitability of war with Japan proceeds from a notion that Japan, inflamed with her transcendent victory over Russia, is seeking a cause of quarrel with the United States with the design of seizing the Philippines and establishing herself in unassailable vantage as a Pacific Power. The alarmist view is that the pretext is ready to her hand in the segregation of Japanese children by the San Francisco board of education.

But apparently Japan does not want to make the incident a pretext for aggression. Viscount HAYASHI, the Japanese Foreign Minister, the same diplomat who as Ambassador to Great Britain kept his head so admirably before and during the war with Russia, proposes "diplomatic adjustment" of the vexed school question if the worst comes—that is to say, if the decision in the school case should uphold the contention of California that the exclusion of the Japanese children is within her authority as a State of the Federal Union, in which event, says Viscount HAYASHI, "the anti-Japanese movement in California will be considered to represent the opinion of the whole United States." There is nothing sinister and ominous in this view; it simply means that Japan will not be able to differentiate between California and the United States, which is not at all astonishing, the Japanese system of government being what it is. The situation, says Viscount HAYASHI, "would require diplomatic adjustment," in other words, a new treaty.

War over an implied reflection upon Japan's hard won equality with the Western nations does not apparently enter into the speculations of Viscount HAYASHI; and when we remember the self-restraint and sagacity with which Japan prolonged her negotiations with China and Russia before appealing to the arbitrament of war it is surely a libel on common sense to suspect Japan of a ferocious impulse to spring at the throat of her ancient friend the United States in the present dilemma, misnamed a crisis.

There is probably no country in the world more desirous of peace than Japan. She is bending all her energies to recover from the economic effects of the conflict with Russia and is making immense strides toward a still greater triumph—the triumph of industrial independence. Trade returns show almost incredible progress. She wants to put money in her purse, and if any fear haunts her it is that her industrial development may be interrupted by the necessity of taking up arms again. It is true that Japan is enlisted for a war; but it is a commercial war, a war of tariffs and bills of lading. Diplomatic adjustment of the San Francisco school trouble, if it should become necessary, ought to be a simple problem for men of such intellectual grasp and worldly experience as Secretary ROOT and Viscount HAYASHI.

It may be surmised that the veiled threats of a resumption of hostilities by Russia at no distant day are giving Japan a great deal more concern than the loose talk of some retired naval officers and some Coast politicians who want to keep on the active list.

The Centralization of Masterpieces.

Paris is at present discussing a question connected with art which has some interest for us. In particular it deserves the attention of that select class of the community which contemplates giving masterpieces to public collections.

In the two or three hundred provincial museums of France a good many very fine pictures are scattered about. Some one has boldly suggested taking the pick of these away from their present owners and collecting them in the central fold of the Louvre. The provincial cities are naturally hostile to the scheme and prepared to resist it stoutly. And though it is true that the masterpieces in question came originally from Paris, it seems unlikely that the Louvre will be able to establish any legal claim to them.

When NAPOLEON'S Generals were pillaging the galleries of Europe they used as a rule to forward their spoils to Paris and there dispose of them to the Government for a reasonable consideration. In this way the authorities in Paris soon had more acquisitions on their hands than they could comfortably take care of. The stress of the times led them to turn the superfluity to political account. Hundreds of works were bestowed on provincial cities to confirm them in their loyalty or to reward them for special services. The pictures were thus unconditional gifts or payments in kind, and the title of their present holders seems to be flawless if the stolen goods are to be retained in France at all. Later on, under NAPOLEON III., a similar distribution occurred from similar motives. It is argued by some that the central authorities, especially on the earlier occasion, did not understand the value of what they were giving away, and that therefore the bestowal must be considered as a mistake subject to correction. But this plea is evidently futile. For one thing, some artists whom we rank very high had comparatively little value in the eyes of even the first connoisseurs in 1806. In short the claim of the Louvre is almost certainly invalid in point of law. From the point of view of art and culture, however, it rests on surer ground, for its advocates are able to invoke the overruling principle of the centralization of masterpieces.

It is the part played in the discussion by this principle which makes it of interest to us. The incompleteness of our art collections is a real advantage in so far as it gives us an opportunity of profiting by the experience of others:

> "They stand for our copy, and once invested
> With all they can teach, we shall see them—"

say, surpassed. Now, no people has had wider experience in collecting or makes a more vital use of its collections than the French. We shall do well to observe then from the present instance to what extreme lengths the French would like to carry this principle; that is, how much importance they attach to it. On the other hand, the improbability of the plan succeeding against the vested interests opposed to it may warn us of the danger of not acting on the principle from the first. Once let masterpieces get scattered and it is almost impossible to reassemble them.

That they are better together no one is likely to dispute in the abstract. Works of art are fastidious creatures in the matter of society. They make a ready response to companions of their own kind. They light up, as it were, and become expansive and confidential in such surroundings. But to isolate an aristocratic piece in democratic surroundings is ill advised. It may revenge itself by casting a marring shadow over its humbler mates and also by closing up into silence itself. Suppose—and such a supposition has nothing academical about it in this country at the present time—that some public spirited Westerner buys a Raphael or an even rarer work. Local patriotism might incline him to place it in the gallery of his native city, where it would be surrounded, one may imagine, by Browns, Joneses and Robinsons. The donor would be making a serious mistake. He would thereby reduce the æsthetic and educational value of his Raphael to a minimum. One swallow does not make a spring, and one isolated masterpiece cannot create the atmosphere through which alone it can exercise its proper influence. The Browns, Joneses and Robinsons would be more or less annihilated by the intruder. The introduction of a new, uncomprehended standard would fill the minds of the citizens with confusion. Even that which they had would be taken away from them. How much wiser to place the great work in a great metropolitan museum, where it would find a harmonious environment among its peers. There it would be seen by vastly more people, and besides that the average spectator would see far more in it. Everything would be in tone, the needful atmosphere would be there. Such works are like battleships; united in a squadron their power far exceeds that of the units in isolation.

There are other reasons for centralizing masterpieces. A comparative study of them is possible only where a considerable number are grouped together. And then, they will probably be less exposed to accidents under the careful guardianship of a great gallery. Moreover, in such a place they will be accessible to the world at large, and these pieces belong to the whole world. To quote a writer in the present French discussion:

> "If the 'Poésie Légère' of FRADIER or the 'Locuste' of SIGALON were in Paris, the universe would know them, but as it is it is ignorant of them, and you cannot even get photographs of these masterpieces. Who suspects that Lyons [no mean city, however] possesses a magnificent Albrecht Dürer, or that the museum of Orléans has two superb Fréminets?"

And then there is really no valid argument on the other side. It is desirable and proper, of course, that minor galleries should contain as much good work as possible, but the best is another question. Even France, rich with the accumulations of centuries, cannot afford to scatter her best. It is certain that this country will never have enough of the really best to permit of its being dispersed with impunity.

While our collections are still in the formative stage, then, the principle of centralizing masterpieces cannot be too urgently preached. Once let Cincinnati or Pittsburg get hold of one of these treasures and there it will remain, lost to the world at large and of comparatively little use to its sequestrators. Without the smallest tinge of selfishness it may be asserted that our Metropolitan Museum is and is likely to remain the fittest receptacle for such works. Not only will they there be most constantly accessible to the greatest number, but the golden rule in this matter is: "To him that hath shall be given."

The Apotheosis of Cheesequakes.

There is a commendable feature in the huge River and Harbor bill now under consideration in the House. "We are trying," said Mr. BURTON, the chairman of the committee, "to get away from the old dribbling policy of appropriating a little here and a little there, and not obtaining complete results anywhere." Thus the committee declined to make a $3,000,000 appropriation to begin a $31,000,000 enterprise. It took the ground that such an undertaking should be considered by itself, and if approved the entire sum should be provided for the completion of the work rather than a driblet for a feeble beginning, requiring appropriation after appropriation to carry it on. The policy is entirely sound.

While the pending measure provides for expenditures amounting to $83,816,138, a larger sum than was ever before called for by a similar bill, it appears to have in it much less than usual of what is commonly known as "pork." Notwithstanding the immense importance of our river and harbor work, the bill providing for it has long been regarded as a kind of reward of merit card to Congressmen who have won recognition by faithful subservience to the behests of their political leaders. The custom of the public has generally been to regard the River and Harbor bill whenever it made its appearance rather as a game played by our legislators than as an important and necessary part of national legislation. The present measure is probably less open to the jeers and the flings of the cynical than any of its predecessors. While it does seem to provide a few hundreds here and a few thousands there to dig some little stream to a depth that will make it navigable for light draught rowboats, very much the greater part of it is to go where there is real need of it.

The Mississippi River is to have nearly $15,000,000. About the same amount is to go to the connections between the Great Lakes. Goodly sums go to Boston, to New York, Norfolk, Savannah, Galveston and elsewhere to improve their harbors and harbor entrances. About $700,000 is proposed for inland waterways along the Louisiana and Texas coasts. Alaska, Hawaii and Porto Rico are duly remembered. Considering the fact that there is an urgent clamor for some $400,000,000 for the completion of projects already under way and for others that are wanted, the committee has done very well in holding the appropriation somewhere near one-fifth of that sum.

Some interest attaches to the fact that this single appropriation bill calls for a sum larger than the total net ordinary revenues of the United States for any single year prior to 1862. Totals that looked very large in the days of PIERCE and BUCHANAN are to-day only the small dust of our Treasury balances.

Uncle Remus on the Negro.

We see no occasion for the astonishment that has been aroused in this part of the country by the eloquent and touching tribute to the negro's virtues by Mr. JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS of Georgia. It is by no means the first time he has spoken to the same effect, nor is he the only Southerner of his class who has proclaimed similar opinions. It ought to be perfectly well known to the entire country that the better class of whites dwell in peace and kindness and good will with their colored fellow creatures, and that practically all of the so-called "race conflicts" are the product of an ancient hate dating back far beyond the civil war and involving, now as always hitherto, no one of whom either race is at all proud.

This is a flagrant truth which Northern people have had the opportunity of assimilating any time during the past forty years. The emancipation of the slaves, effected in reality after the surrender of LEE, JOHNSTON and KIRBY SMITH, made no change in the purely personal relations between the freedmen and their former masters. Not even the abominable episode of reconstruction availed to eradicate the affectionate *entente* of the classes and turn them against each other to the evil ends of animosity and vengeance. The old slaveholders knew that their quondam servants and dependents were innocent of vicious purpose. The latter understood full well that when in need of help and sympathy and pitying ministration the former offered them their only sure refuge and relief. No actor in this mournful tragedy has forgotten anything. No political or social transmutation has changed anything so far as these two are concerned. The quarrels and the violent and bloody clashes of which so much is made in our newspapers, whether through honest ignorance or malign intent, are far outside of the philosophy of any important element of the Southern population.

JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS tells the simple truth when he says that the negroes of the South are moving onward, accumulating property, making themselves useful citizens and cementing the hallowed ties of respect and confidence between the classes which represent the South's righteousness and civilization. In this section we concern ourselves too much with the insignificant minority. We accept the testimony of the "educated" few on the negro side—educated to little more than a fruitless smattering of vanity and conceit—and we much too easily imagine that the Southern "cracker" stands for the ideas and illustrates the methods of the whites. No falser or more misleading hypothesis could be presented. The negro who typifies violence and barbarism is one in ten thousand. The white man who employs the shotgun and the torch is quite as unimportant. We shower our solicitudes on the pestiferous exception and overlook the wholesome rule.

Uncle REMUS knows what he is talking about—knows it to its deepest depths.

One result of the recent wrecking of a low Corean resort here by marines of the American Legation guard is twenty-five general court-martials. An attempt to ascertain the names of the men guilty of the outrage resulted in denial of all knowledge of the affair by every man of the guard.—*Despatch to* THE SUN *from Pekin.*

The procedure was eminently correct: court-martials all around, and a painstaking effort to identify and punish the guilty and clear the innocent. Some of the Legation guards must have been on duty when the wrecking was done. They may or may not have known the rioters, but it would be outrageous injustice to make a clean sweep of the guard because every man denied knowledge of the affair.

I have heard its murmuring waves as they went singing their beautiful song toward the Gulf since the early days of my childhood, and they have continued to sing along the path of my life and have given me inspiration to love the beauties of nature and admire those grandeurs and those glories that come alone from the great creative hand of GOD above.—*From the Hon.* EZEKIEL SAMUEL CANDLER, *Jr.'s, oration on the Tombigbee River.*

The eloquent gentleman was born in Florida and moved to Tishomingo county, Miss., when he was eight years old, and there he grew to manhood. In Tishomingo the Tombigbee is a mere thread of water, and it has hundreds of miles to sing on its way to the Gulf, soon leaving Mississippi and crossing the border into Alabama, where its song grows louder by degrees until it may be called a river without poetic license. If the seeping sources of the Tombigbee could inspire in Mr. CANDLER such beautiful language, what an outburst of ecstacy there would have been had he lived at Demopolis, where it swirls in full flood. But the appropriation's the thing after all; and why are the Alabama members mute and inglorious?

Captain AMUNDSEN is reported to be so well pleased with the results of his long vigils in the neighborhood of the north magnetic pole that he is already planning an expedition to the Antarctic to fix the position of the south magnetic pole. No one has ever been within hundreds of miles of the south magnetic pole, and its supposed position is marked on the best maps with an interrogation point. It is at least certain that it is several hundred miles north of the point which SCOTT attained in 1908 on the inland ice of Victoria Land.

The explorer will not be able to start on his new quest with such a modest equipment as that which took him to the neighborhood of the north magnetic pole. Rarely a year passes that a ship cannot make her way, as the Gjöa did, to the place where Ross fixed the position of the north magnetic pole on the west coast of Boothia Felix. But the south magnetic pole is supposed to be situated in the far interior of Victoria Land and can be reached only by a long sledge journey over the inland ice. The difficulties will be intensified by the prevailing unfavorable climatic conditions in the Antarctic, the frequent cyclonic snowstorms and complete lack in the interior of animal life with which to replenish food supplies. AMUNDSEN'S south polar expedition will therefore require larger means of transportation and greater supplies of food than were necessary in his northern work.

The Belgians also have decided to send out another expedition to the Antarctic. Everything points to a speedy renewal of geographical activity there.

The returned M. P.s are standing nobly together to canonize SWETTENHAM. Some of their interviews read as badly as the Governor's humorous letter to Admiral DAVIS. Evidently it was no offence in their eyes; but they can be left to the tender mercies of the discerning English editor.

THE SALVATION ARMY'S WORK.

Its Relief and Religious System Said to Be Ineffective.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* In THE SUN of January 31 is an article on the work of the Salvation Army which is rather inaccurate and misleading. You say that the Army last year "supplied 4,000,000 beds to homeless wanderers." As a matter of fact the Army's lodging houses and institutions of every kind can only accommodate 8,000 persons a night, or less than 3,000,000 a year. And these beds are "supplied" in the same way that the Waldorf-Astoria supplies beds to "homeless wanderers." If you have the price of a bed and bath the Army, like the Waldorf-Astoria, will take you in. Without the price it is certainly useless to apply at an Army hotel, for the officer in charge is strictly prohibited from admitting anybody without cash in advance. The price charged is the same as in other lodging houses, from 10 to 50 cents a night.

The coal and ice "distributed" by the Army were likewise "distributed" in the usual way of the coal and ice trade. They were sold by the Army's coal and ice wagons to any one who had the price.

The 13,000 homeless children placed in the Army's children's homes are fictitious. The Salvation Army maintains three homes for children in the United States, with a total accommodation of less than 200 beds. For the majority of these children the relatives or friends pay a fixed charge.

The story that "settlement workers in the slums gather up families who are having a hard time of it" and colonize them in California or Colorado is absolutely untrue. The Army has two colonies, not three, on which during the last eight years a total of about fifty families have bought land on instalments and settled. The majority of these settlers are country people who never lived in any "slums." Of the city people whom the Army persuaded to try the simple life of the farmer, nearly all were fairly well off and in no case denizens of the slums. Most of them were unable to make a living at farming and returned to the cities. Rider Haggard's report on the Army's experiment shows that not one New York family was colonized.

The statement that the churches are unable to reach the poor as the Army is reported to do is silly. Look at the congregations in any of the Catholic churches in the tenement districts. Go to any mission hall and you will find them. The Jerry McAuley's Water Street Mission, the Bowery Mission and the Florence Mission have done better work among the unchurched masses and the outcasts than all the Army posts in Greater New York.

If you are right in the statement that only 12,000,000 people attended the meetings of the Army last year then it goes to show that the unchurched masses are not crowding the Army halls. Each of the 700 Salvation Army corps in the United States is under orders to conduct ten indoor meetings each week. That would indicate an average attendance of thirty-five persons, including the Army's own members, at each meeting. In Greater New York the Army maintains twenty-two corps. On the basis of the average attendance of thirty-three the Salvation Army has a nightly congregation of less than 1,000, including its own soldiers, in the five boroughs of New York city. V. C. E.

NEW YORK, February 2.

Activity of the Grand Army of Boswellians.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* The anecdote narrated in Boswell's "Johnson" concerning which Charlton Yarnall inquires in a letter in to-day's SUN is to be found in Vol. II., page 145, of Birkbeck Hill's edition, under date 1770, and it is as follows: "Much inquiry having been made concerning a gentleman, who had quitted a company where Johnson was, and no information being obtained; at last Johnson observed, that 'he did not care to speak ill of any man behind his back, but he believed the gentleman was an attorney.'"

WILMINGTON, Del., February 1. C. L. WARD.

Not to duplicate replies substantially the same, the following are selected and condensed:

Herbert Henshaw of Brooklyn informs Mr. Yarnall that the remark of Johnson about attorneys occurs in the material furnished to Boswell by the Rev. Dr. Maxwell of Falkland, pertaining to the year 1770, when Boswell was in Scotland and did not see Johnson at all.

A Yale student refers Mr. Yarnall to page 420 of Volume I. of the Henry Frowde edition, used in the Yale classrooms.

The Free Library of Philadelphia writes that the anecdote may be found on page 108 of "Johnsoniana," London, Bell & Sons, 1889, where Johnson is reported by Mrs. Piozzi as making the remark about lawyers.

William H. Wood of New York refers Mr. Yarnall to page 157 of an edition published in 1897 by Thomas Whittaker, where the story appears in a chapter of what Boswell called "Collectanea."

"Tenth New Jersey" sends Mr. Yarnall to the foot of page 145 of Volume II. of G. B. Hill's edition, published by the Harpers in 1891; and this correspondent chides the Boswellian inquirer for not hunting there the passage himself instead of troubling a good natured newspaper.

Horace Chittenden of Burlington, Vt., has made "a rather careful search" in Boswell and is inclined to believe the anecdote is not there. He points out the fact that Dr. Johnson "was something of a lawyer himself and frequently aided Boswell in his practice as a barrister."

These are a few of many. It is evident that Boswell's "Johnson," if not among the best sellers, is still among the best readers.

Bitter Cry of the Pedestrian.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* Is there not a law compelling property holders or lessees to keep the sidewalks in front of their premises free from ice or snow at a certain time after snow or sleet has stopped coming down? Are not the police supposed to enforce it?

I have been in New York more than forty years. My present business compels much walking, and never have I seen anything quite so bad as the sidewalks are now. It would take six pages of this paper, I guess, to point out the streets which were in such a bad condition as to make walking thrice as laborious as need be were the ordinances observed or if man had more feeling for his fellowman (or woman). J. E. MENTHOLE.

NEW YORK, February 1.

The Hawkins River.

Lem Hawkins sprang a kitchen leak,
And as he watched the crawling rill,
Before his troubled mind arose
The vision of a plumber's bill,
Whereat he cursed his star so ill.

It trickled from behind the sink,
Meandered toward the pantry door,
Then changed its mind and turned around
To form a pool upon the floor,
A spreading puddle, nothing more.

And then an inspiration came;
He left the stream without a word
And hastening to his Congressman
Right earnestly with him conferred,
Till hope and joy his bosom stirred.

Behold, the Pork bill in its list
Two million dollars set aside
To dredge the Hawkins River out,
And make it long, and make it wide,
And put some water in for tide.

And so when Uncle Sam is done
The Mississippi will look cheap,
And up Lem Hawkins' kitchen leak
The navies of the world shall sweep
And ride at anchor on its deep.

MCLANDBURGH WILSON.

THE INSINUATIONS OF A FOREIGNER.

I reproduced a short time ago some fanciful remarks on this country by a European visitor. The sight of himself in print has evoked a longish letter from him, for which, as he has not marked it private, he is perhaps reconciled to a similar fate. He writes:

"I try to console myself for having talked aloud (unawares) about America by remembering that one of your strongly marked traits is a love of publicity. In this respect one might call the United States the Greece of to-day, if it were not absurd to compare your mighty continent to so small a country. The trait is, perhaps, most visible in the West, though one may perceive it also in New York, especially on the West Side.

"Your titanic hotels, in which, all things (especially bills) considered, more hospitality is shown to outsiders than to guests, and which as a rule are entirely walled with plate glass on the first floor, so that one has the advantage of eating, seeing one's friends and transacting one's business under shelter without being deprived of the full audience of the streets; your unenclosed gardens, which are apparently kept open on solemn democratic principles—at least, while I was in one town a newly erected garden fence was pulled down with an urgent caution to the owner not to stick either it or himself up again—and, then, your attitude toward the publication of your private affairs in the press, which seems to amount to an admission that you have no legitimately private affairs: these are some of the indications of that Greek quality in your national life, that public sociability, which cannot fail to impress every visitor.

"I alluded before to the democratic emancipation of your women, but (apparently) without dwelling on its brighter aspects. Let me say now that an English woman of discernment, who has been married for several years in your country, assured me that 'cattishness' was unknown among your women—that they do not, either explicitly or slyly, snub one another after the manner of the Old World. When I submitted this dictum to an American lady she exclaimed: 'Oh!' and then rather provokingly stopped herself. The 'Oh!' I must confess, sounded like an exclamation of surprise; but, after all, one could hardly expect such a difference to be more than comparative. My further inquiries quite confirmed the idea that American women are less cattish, at all events, than European women. It is a great thing for one section of the community to enjoy this comparative peace within its borders! The blessing comes, I suppose, from the superior position of the sex in America. European men are not cattish—because they aren't held under. Whether in course of time cattishness may become a male quality among you is too remote a question to invite serious consideration—though one might, perhaps, observe that emancipation shows a tendency to carry your women rather higher than mere equality. So long ago as 1850 Lord Lytton, author of 'Lucile,' who was then an attaché at Washington, wrote home: 'The women are the oligarchy of this country.' Of many symptoms of this female tendency none seems more significant than the report I have just heard that a prominent American is about to propose a tax on old maids. Taxes on bachelors have been suggested in Europe, but it has never occurred to us to hold the other sex as delinquent and responsible for celibacy. Surely this is a remarkable tribute to the elevation of your women!

"One of my notes, by the bye, I have hardly known whether to classify under 'Supremacy of American Women,' or under 'American Optimism.' It may serve as a transition from one subject to the other. In a variety theatre in one of your large cities I was able to enjoy the conversation of two men behind me. One had a happy, buoyant nature and praised every 'turn' glowingly; the other was more reserved. Presently a chorus ballet came on. The sanguine man roused my envy by his facile enthusiasm. 'Gee! Ain't that a dandy bunch? Ain't that great? Say, Jim, which of them do you like best?' 'Oh, well,' said the other, 'they're a bit too old for' my taste.' 'Get along!' cried the first, indignantly. 'What are you kicking at now? Why, there ain't a girl among them over forty!'

"American buoyancy may not always rise to this pitch, but its manifestations are numerous and unmistakable. One thing, however, rather puzzled me. If you are so cheerful, why do you need so many exhortations to cheerfulness? I saw printed cards advising the public to smile, not to worry, and so on, in elevators, hotel offices, barbers' shops, private houses. I scarcely know, indeed, where I didn't see them, to say nothing of the advertisements of magazines and books as concentrated essences of uplifting sunshine. This was in a parlor in Wyoming: 'Why not smile? It costs no more than scowling, and brings in much larger returns.' At a fair in the same town a show was placarded: 'A thousand dollar smile for five cents! Your money returned if it comes off within a week!' I was told that one of your chief religious sects owes its popularity largely to the abundant smile with which worshippers issue from its Sunday morning services. And, then, I have just received an assortment of Christmas cards from New York. I sent for them, wishing to have something novel to distribute among my friends here, but unfortunately I could not use more than one or two of them. All are hortatory and seek to propagate smiling. One begins:

> You might as well keep smiling,
> For there ain't a bit of sense
> In fidgeting and riling.

"Another:

> As life is short, 'tis my belief
> We'd better make a truce with grief.

"Another:

> There ain't no use in frettin'.

"In another of similar tenor the couplet occurs:

> Smiles at dinner are the way
> For a luscious swallow

"Nearly all of them make grave innuendoes against the recipient's character. One begins, for instance:

> Did you tackle that trouble that came your way
> With a resolute heart?

"Another:

> If you must keep thinking,
> Choose the Good to think about;
> 'Twill start the Bad to shrinking,
> And shove your troubles out.

"Another:

> Good nature is quite catching,
> But then it is a virtue,
> So catch it strong, and have it long;
> Its symptoms will not hurt you!

"What kind of compliments of the season are these, to tell one's friend on Christmas morning that his 'bad' needs shrinking, or that a little more good nature will do him no harm? All the cards were beautifully printed and colored, and quite expensive, according to our modest ideas. Imagine my mortification at not being able to send three-quarters of them any further than my waste paper basket.

"Knowing the acuteness of your sense of humor, which could not possibly overlook the incongruity of such Christmas messages, if they were incongruous, and recalling the notices in elevators, barbers' shops, &c., I have been driven to the conclusion that there really exists in your country a need of such exhortations which is not felt elsewhere. And this in spite of your superior air of cheerfulness! Well, not the least cheerful of men, Beaumarchais, confessed that he laughed 'for fear of crying.' You may be a nation of Beaumarchais, which in my opinion any nation might be proud to be. But, then, the question comes up: 'What special reasons have you, with all your prosperity, for crying?'

"Instead of trying to answer that ticklish question, let me pass on to the American type.

"Wherever I went I heard the word 'type.' Oftenest, perhaps, in the newest parts. If talking could create the thing, the Californians, Coloradans, &c., would have types of the most emphatic kind. A Scotchwoman who had lived twelve years in a New Jersey town was asked how she liked Americans. 'Well,' she answered, 'I haven't met any yet.' A European is naturally prone at first to recognize familiar though transplanted European types, than to perceive the something new added here which is strange to him. Even in the third and fourth generations he sees plainly enough something which he has known as Swedish, or Scotch, or Italian, or German. He feels as if he was at a masquerade ball, where every one is dressed up as an Uncle Sam or an Aunt Samuelina, and he is always expecting them to drop the disguise and be themselves again. However, after a while he begins to detect the 'novum quid.' He perceives that they are Swedes, Scots, &c.—with a difference. I believe that no one has yet defined this difference very accurately. To myself some of its physical insignia seem to be a certain intentness of the eye and a certain mobile sinuosity of the mouth, suggestive of concentration of purpose on the one hand and of adaptability on the other. May I suggest as another feature of your mental type a hitherto unrealized combination of juvenility with agedness? Though you have the eagerness and energy of youth, there is surely something oldish about you. Such qualities of youth as simplicity and naïveté are anything but American, are they not?

"One of the cleverest contemporary writers in France, Maurice Barrès, tried to show in his 'Déracinés' that uprooting people and transplanting them even from one side of France to the other was productive of the gravest moral troubles; he even included a tendency to murder among the consequences. Well, that you are an uprooted, transplanted people is evidently one of the basal facts of your national life. Even the comparatively old settlers in the East have in large numbers fallen back again into this class through migration to the Far West. And though, of course, your experiment falsifies Barrès's extreme conclusions, it is clear enough that deracination must have far reaching consequences of some kind. Perhaps the mixture of youth with eld may be one of them. Transplanting rejuvenates, but uprooting may have an aging influence. After all, 'antiquitas seculi, juventus mundi.' Back here, in Europe, lie the deep soils watered by the springs of national youth. Your immigrants are cut off from the true founts of their racial adolescence. The old folk at home are also in a way, I think, younger than them. Compare a native Briton or Italian with an American, and can you doubt it? Hence, perhaps, that cheerfulness of yours, which nevertheless needs pick-me-ups. New surroundings exhilarate, but a separation from old associations is wearing in the end—even to the second and third, though all unconscious, generations.

"On the other hand, this should be a more or less temporary symptom. You are a new nation now, rather than a young one. But the roots are striking deeper all the time. Is it to be your happy destiny to grow younger as you grow older?"

W. A. G.

A Man of Genius and His Family.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* Now that Bret Harte's daughter Jessamy (Mrs. Frederic Dorr Steele) has been taken from the poorhouse in Portland, Me., by strangers and is to have a theatrical benefit here given by persons whose only interest in her is due to the fact that she is the daughter of the author, one of whose stories in dramatized form is now being produced in this city, it is time the truth were told about this celebrated author, whose writings have caused him to be surrounded with a halo.

However great Bret Harte was as a writer of California classics, however beautiful his stories of early life in the Golden West are, his treatment of his family was simply contemptible. For twenty years or more before his death he lived in London in ease, receiving a large and steady income from the sale of his writings.

All this time his wife and two daughters were living in Plainfield, N. J., struggling to keep up appearances and to make both ends meet. Letters from the celebrated father and husband were few and far between, and remittances came still less frequently. What a bitter thing it is for those who are refined, educated and well born to put up a fight against poverty! And still the brave mother and her daughters were never heard by their friends to utter a harsh word against the husband and father who had taken himself out of their life and who lived in ease among the literary lights of London. So far as the outside world ever knew, Mrs. Harte, Jessamy and Ethel looked upon their father as a wonderful man and one of America's greatest writers. The daughters were brought up to revere him, while the mother bore her sorrow in silence.

Why Bret Harte deserted his family so cruelly—for it can be called nothing less than desertion—is a mystery. No doubt in years to come it will be laid to the eccentricities of genius. Never once, after going abroad late in the '70s or early in the '80s, did Bret Harte return to his native land or did his wife and daughters visit him. After his death in London a few years ago Mrs. Harte and the youngest daughter went abroad, hoping he might have left something that would make their life a little smoother. But the genius had left nothing. Instead of getting a royalty on his books from his publishers he had received a stated sum annually, and this income ended with his death. All left for the family was the memory of a man looked upon as great by all except those who knew.

Bret Harte also had two sons, but they were able to take care of themselves, and they did more for the mother and the two girls growing up to womanhood than their father ever did. They left home years ago, and neither is in this country, so far as former friends know. At last accounts Mrs. Harte and Ethel, who went to London after Bret Harte's death and were discovered living in poverty, were the beneficiaries there of a fund established by such prominent authors as Gilbert Parker, Conan Doyle, George Meredith and Anthony Hope Hawkins.

Does it not seem strange that an author whose fine mind and seemingly inspired pen could blend love, sentiment, pathos and humor as Bret Harte has done in "M'liss," "The Luck of Roaring Camp," "Salomy Jane's Kiss" and many other stories could be so brutal toward his own flesh and blood?

NEW YORK, February 2.

To Feed the Birds.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* For the benefit of the birds and to answer the inquiry of "A. T." let me say that to feed the birds with suet a bag is not necessary. Simply run a stout piece of wire through a good solid piece of suet or beef, or take a beefy bone and tie a string to it and attach it to a tree. The birds will find it, and I know that "Anne Estelle" will derive lots of pleasure in watching them plcking away. G. D. CLARK.

PLAINVILLE, Conn., January 31.